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ABSTRACT

The feelings that superintendents have about the methods used by school boards to evaluate their effectiveness may influence their motivation, relationship with the board, and organizational success. National studies reveal that 46.9 percent of superintendents have positive feelings, 18.3 have negative feelings, and 34.8 percent have neutral feelings about the evaluaation methods used. Nationally a positive statistical correlation is found between the feelings superintendents have about the evaluation methods used and 15 task variables. Similar statistical data were found in a study of Alaskan superintendents. A positive relationship was found between feelings the superintendents have about evaluation methods and 26 task variables. Personal-experiential variables appear to have no effect on feelings superintendents have about evaluation methods. An example of an evaluation form is provided with this report. (MD)

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EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENTS

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EVALUATION OF SUPERINTENDENTS

All the superintendents are evaluated formally as well as informally. Sometimes the reports are written, sometimes not. They are evaluated by their boards, assistants, principals, teachers, community, and even the taxpayers. Because an evaluation can not be avoided. It appears that an appropriate, systematic, and satisfactory evaluation system would be helpful to both the evaluators and the evaluatee.

An effective evaluation may be useful in improving the performance of an individual, planning, motivation, communication, better relationship amongst board and the superintendent, and renewal of the employment contract.

School boards want to be assured that the superintendent serving their school system is effective in providing leadership for that system. Superintendents want to be assured that they are doing a good job ... that they are indeed, living up to the expectations of their school boards and their communities. A good evaluation system may provide that assurance for both the superintendents and the school board.[1]

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[1]George B. Redfern Evaluating the Superintendent - A Joint Publication of the American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association (Arlington, Va: The American Association of School Administrators, 1980), p. 3.

Although a superintendent is an evaluatee, he (she) plays a vital role in the evaluation system to be used by the board. The American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association suggests: "Superintendent shall submit to the Board of Education a recommended format for this written evaluation."[2] The feelings superintendents have about the methods used to evaluate their performance may influence their motivation, relationship with board-members, and organizational success.

Three fourths of the superintendents reported that they have job descriptions. Of those who have them, roughly 60 percent say that they are evaluated according to those descriptions and 70 percent are evaluated annually. The major reasons superintendents cite for this evaluation are "to provide periodic and systematic accountability"; "to help establish relevant performance goals"; and "to identify areas needing improvement."[3]

Data-analysis of the national study reveals that nationwide 46.9 percent of the school superintendents have positive feelings, 18.3 percent have negative feelings, and 34.8 percent have medium or neutral feelings about the

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[2]Ibid., p. 26.

[3]Luvern L. Cunningham and Joseph T. Hentges The American School Superintendency: A Summary Report (Arlington, Va: American Association of School Administrators, 1982), p. 68.

methods used to evaluate their performance.[4] See Table 1.

TABLE 1

FEELINGS OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS (NATIONWIDE)

Feelings		Frequency	Percent
Negative	1	29	5.6
	2	66	12.7
	3	181	34.8
	4	185	35.6
Positive	5	59	11.3
	Total	520	100.0

EFFECT OF TASK VARIABLES (NATIONWIDE)

Two statistical techniques, canonical correlation and multiple/correlation analysis revealed that, nationwide there is a positive relationship between the feelings the superintendents have about the methods used to evaluate their performance and 15 task variables: (1) renewal of their employment contract, (2) recognition of their work by others, (3) status in the community, (4) opportunity for their personal growth, (5) their overall satisfaction as a superintendent, (6) time they spend on their relationship

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[4] Krishan Chand, "Job Satisfaction of Superintendents in the United States" (Ed.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1982).

These data are derived from the data collected for the said dissertation. This reference also applies to table 2.

with the community, (7) attitude of community towards education, (8) number of hours put in at work per week, (9) attitude of parents towards education, (10) sense of achievement of the superintendents in their profession, (11) amount of paper work with which they deal, (12) time they spend on their relationship with the teachers, (13) their safety on job, (14) time they spend on their relationship with the non-certified staff, (15) importance they give to their relationship with non-certified staff. Coefficient of correlations between the feelings the superintendents have about the methods used to evaluate their performance and the stated task variables are given in table 2.

TABLE 2

COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATIONS BETWEEN FEELINGS OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS AND TASK VARIABLES (NATIONWIDE)

Dependent Variable= Methods used to evaluate Task Variables	r
Renewal of their employment contract	.5
Recognition of their work by others	.4
Status in the community	.4
Opportunity for personal growth	.3
Overall satisfaction of superintendent	.3
Time spent on their relationship with the community	.3
Attitude of community towards education	.3
Number of hours put in at work per week	.3
Attitude of parents towards education	.3

Sense of achievement in their profession	.3
Amount of paper work with which they deal	.3
Time spent on their relationship with teachers	.3
Their safety on job	.3
Time spent on their relationship with non-certified staff	.2
Importance they give to their relationship with non-certified staff	.2

n = 520

The other task variables do not have any effect on the feelings the superintendents have about the methods used to evaluate their performance. It does not matter how much importance he (she) places on or how much time he spends on: (1) curriculum, (2) finance, (3) state regulations, (4) federal regulations, (5) his freedom to employ staff, (6) his freedom to dismiss staff, (7) collective negotiations, (8) relationship with board-members, (9) relationship with assistants, (10) relationship with principals, (11) relationship with state department of education, (12) importance he (she) gives to the relationship with teachers, community. It does not matter whether he would or would not choose the superintendency again, as to his feelings about the methods used to evaluate his performance.

Data derived from a study of the Alaskan school superintendents reveals that statewide 46.7 percent of the school superintendents have positive feelings, 26.6 percent

have negative feelings, and 26.7 percent have medium or neutral feelings about the methods used to evaluate their performance.[5] See Table 3.

TABLE 3

FEELINGS OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS (IN ALASKA)

Feeling		Frequency	Percent
Negative	1	3	6.6
	2	10	21.7
	3	12	26.1
	4	14	30.4
Positive	5	7	15.2
	Total	46	100.0

EFFECTS OF TASK VARIABLES (IN ALASKA)

Data derived from the study of the Alaskan school superintendents revealed that there is a positive relationship between the feelings the superintendents have about the methods used to evaluate their performance and 26 task variables: (1) their overall satisfaction as a superintendent, (2) renewal of their employment contract, (3) attitude of

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[5] Krishan Chand Job Satisfaction of Alaska School Superintendents and its Comparison with the Nationwide American Superintendency ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 226 483, 1983.

These data are derived from the data collected for the said study. This reference also applies to table 4.

parents towards education, (4) attitude of community towards education, (5) time spent on their relationship with board-members, (6) status as superintendent in the community, (7) time spent on their relationship with the assistants, (8) time spent on their relationship with the non-certified staff, (9) their sense of achievement in the profession, (10) amount of paper work with which they deal, (11) time spent to dismiss staff, (12) importance they give to their relationship with assistants, (13) importance they give to their relationship with board-members, (14) time spent on their relationship with principals, (15) time spent on their relationship with community, (16) importance superintendents give to dismiss staff, (17) recognition of their work by others, (18) importance superintendents give to state department of education, (19) importance they give to employ staff, (20) time they spend to employ staff, (21) number of hours put in at work per week, (22) importance they give to their relationship with principals, (23) their safety on job, (24) importance they give to collective negotiations, (25) time spent on curriculum, and (26) their opportunity for personal growth. Coefficient of correlations between the feelings the superintendents in Alaska have about the methods used to evaluate their performance and the stated task variables are given in table 4.

TABLE 4

COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATIONS BETWEEN FEELINGS OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS AND TASK VARIABLES (IN ALASKA)

Dependent Variable= Methods used to evaluate performance	
Task Variables	r
Overall satisfaction as superintendent	.6
Renewal of their employment contract	.5
Attitude of parents towards education	.5
Attitude of community towards education	.5
Time spent on their relationship with board-members	.5
Status as superintendent in the community	.5
Time spent on relationship with assistants	.4
Time spent on relationship with non-certified staff	.4
Sense of achievement in their profession	.4
Amount of paper work with which they deal	.4
Time spent to dismiss staff	.4
Importance given to their relationship with assistants	.4
Importance they give to their relationship with board-members	.4
Time spent on relationship with principals	.3
Time spent on their relationship with community	.3
Importance given to dismiss staff	.3
Recognition of their work by others	.3
Importance superintendents give to state department of education	.3

Importance given to employ staff	.3
Time spent to employ staff	.3
Number of hours put in at work per week	.3
Importance they give to their relationship with principals	.3
Safety on job	.2
Importance given to collective negotiation	.2
Time spent on curriculum	.2
Opportunity for personal growth	.2

n = 46

The other task variables do not have any effect on the feelings of the school superintendents in Alaska about the methods used to evaluate their performance. It does not matter how much importance he places on or how much time he (she) spends on: (1) finance, (2) state regulations, (3) federal regulations, and (4) relationship with teachers. It does not matter how much importance he (she) places on relationship with community, and relationship with non-certified staff. It does not matter how much time he (she) spends on relationship with state department of education and whether he (she) would or would not choose the superintendency again, as to his (her) feelings about the methods used to evaluate his (her) performance.

EFFECT OF PERSONAL-EXPERIENTIAL VARIABLES

None of the personal-experiential variables appears to have any effect on the feelings the superintendents have

about the methods used to evaluate their performance nationwide and also in the state of Alaska.

It does not matter whether he (she) is employed by an elementary, junior high, senior high, or a K-12 school district; it does not matter if he (she) is working for a small, medium or large school distirct; it does not matter if he (she) is working for an urban, suburban, or rural school district; it does not matter if he (she) is working for a fiscally dependent or independent district; it does not matter how many people are employed in the district. Nor does it matter if a superintendent has a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or a higher degree. It does not matter what is his (her) major field of study. It does not matter what is his (her) area of certification nor does it matter what has been his (her) experience as an educator/non educator.

The superintendent's age, race, marital status, sex, whether or not his (her) spouse works, or if he (she) takes an active part in extra curricular activities involving youth do not have any noticiable influence on the feelings the superintendents have about the methods used to evaluate their performance.

EVALUATION STRATEGIES

Understanding, trust, respect, and an open communication between the board and superintendent are considered to be helpful for an effective evaluation. Both the board and the superintendent should consistently strive to maintain and enhance a good working relationship. Some of the helpful

hints for an effective evaluation are:

Individualize

It is impractical, if not impossible, to prescribe a surefire blueprint for designing and implementing an evaluation program to fit every school system. On the contrary, each system must construct its own plan to accomodate any unique requirements.[6] Evaluation systems ... create frustration for school boards that borrow them without really considering local needs.[7]

Revise

An evaluation system is a continuous and cyclical process.[8] Revise an existing evaluation program as soon as it is no longer regarded as being useful. Develop an organized program if one does not exist and is desired.

Non-threatening

Develop and adopt a system for non-threatening cooperative assessment of the performance of individuals.[9]

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[6]George B. Redfern Evaluating Teachers and Administrators: A Performance Objectives Approach (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), p. 113.

[7]Ronald R. Booth and Gerald R. Glaub, Illinois Association of School Boards, Planned Appraisal of the Superintendents. A Performance-Based Program for School Boards and Superintendents ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 154 536, 1978, p. 29.

[8]Dale L. Bolton Evaluating Administrative Personnel in School Systems (N.Y.: Teachers College Press, 1980), p. 37.

[9]Edward S. Hickox Assessment of Senior Officials or How to Get the Goods on the Chief Executive Officer ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 082 376, 1972, p. 2.

Contract

At the time a superintendent is employed, it is important to discuss the methods that will be used to assess performance. In fact, a provision should be included in the contract clarifying how evaluation will be conducted.[10]

Flexibility

The needs of the district can expand or change, and the tasks of the chief school officer should reflect these needs. His evaluation must, accordingly, have some flexibility. The broad frame work, however, within which the evaluative process takes place, should be established by agreement of all those involved.[11]

Positive Attitude

Try to keep a positive mental attitude throughout the evaluation process. Don't let the emotions get out of control.

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[10] Redfern Evaluating the Superintendent, p. 15.

[11] Lila N. Carol, New Jersey School Boards Association, A Study of Methods for Evaluating Chief School Officers in Local School Districts. Management Information Series No. 1 ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 079 815, 1972, p. 36.

AN EXAMPLE

Several type of instruments are in use for evaluation, e.g. essay type, graph type, compulsory choice type, etc. Each district should decide for the type of the evaluation syster they want to use. Here is an example of a checklist type evaluation system. Related items were obtained from the professional literature and previous research studies. It is only an example of the instrument and each school system must check carefully all the items in the instrument and then make changes (if and as needed) in the following instrument as per their own requirements. The words unsatisfactory - satisfactory in the example may be replaced by any other appropriate set of words like negative - positive, low - high, need improvement - meet expectations, etc., as per the choice of the individual school system. It desired, other type of evaluation instruments may be designed using the needed items. Board presidents should give a consolidated copy of the evaluation to their superintendents and also discuss the evaluation in a scheduled conference. Laws concerning evaluation of supervisory employees in public must be taken into consideration. Related laws might vary from one state to another.

Superintendent's Evaluation Instrument

Date: ----------

Superintendent's Name: ----------

Name of the Board President: ----------

Circle the number that best bescribes your impression about:

	Unsatisfactory				Satisfactory
SUPERINTENDENT'S MANAGEMENT OF:					
1. Preparation for board meetings	1	2	3	4	5
2. Providing the board members with necessary information they need to make decisions	1	2	3	4	5
3. Implementation of board's policies	1	2	3	4	5
4. Short and long-range planning	1	2	3	4	5
5. Curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
6. Finance	1	2	3	4	5
7. Personnel	1	2	3	4	5
8. Facilities	1	2	3	4	5
9. Collective negotiations	1	2	3	4	5
10. Bilingual/cross-cultural education	1	2	3	4	5
11. Delegation of responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
12. School laws	1	2	3	4	5
13. Affirmative action	1	2	3	4	5
14. Students achievement	1	2	3	4	5
15. Maintaining open climate	1	2	3	4	5
16. Expects excellence	1	2	3	4	5
17. Extra curricular activities	1	2	3	4	5
18. Communication	1	2	3	4	5
19. Public relations	1	2	3	4	5
20. Personal and professional qualities	1	2	3	4	5
SUPERINTENDENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH:					
21. Board members	1	2	3	4	5
22. Assistants	1	2	3	4	5
23. Principals	1	2	3	4	5
24. Teachers	1	2	3	4	5
25. Community	1	2	3	4	5
26. Non-certified staff	1	2	3	4	5
27. State department of education	1	2	3	4	5
Your overall impression of superintendent's performance	1	2	3	4	5

Commnets and suggestions:

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